

Series: Upside Down

Title: Part 6 - Radical Community

Date: May 12/13, 2018

Speaker: Phil Vaughan

Big Idea: The earliest Jesus-followers formed an incredible community characterized by common devotion, deep relationships, and selfless generosity. Devotion to Jesus expressed in community is just as much the pathway to wholeness today as it was in the first century.

Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Discuss It:

1. How often do you have a sit-down meal with family or friends? What sorts of distractions and interruptions do you have to eliminate in order to pull it off? What makes it hard to find the time to do it?
2. **Read Acts 2:42-47.** Imagine a world without any Christian church. If you lived in such a world, and then suddenly found yourself swept up in this pattern of teaching, fellowship, bread-breaking and prayer, what would be your reaction? What would be the benefits of living this closely connected with other people? What would be the risks and challenges?
3. How else did the early Christians express their common life in practical ways (2:43-47)?
4. As Phil mentioned, Acts 2:42 is often regarded as laying down the "four marks of the church": the apostles' teaching, the common life of those who believed, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. These four go together. You can't separate them or leave one out without damage to the whole thing. Look at each of the four. What risks does a church face if any one of these is absent or neglected?
5. Phil challenged us to think through which of these four things are actively occurring in our own lives, and which are missing. How would you respond for yourself?
6. While these four marks of the church are important, Phil taught that it wasn't the marks themselves that matter... it's the fact that they point to Jesus that matters. In other words, "*The church is a gathering centered around a person,*" (i.e., not centered around a list of activities, doctrines, an ideology, etc.). Why is this principle important to remember? Why isn't it enough to pursue these marks of the church as ends in themselves?

Apply It:

- What is the one thing you need to take away from this study?
- What will help you remember it?
- Is there anything that needs to change in your thinking, actions, or relationships as a result?